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HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PUBLICATIONS 2

Chapters in the North-West History Prior  
to 1890 - - - Related by Old Timers



The Alberta Field  
Force of '85

BATTLEFORD 3  
SASKATCHEWAN

VOL. I. No. VII  
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6. This is the West's urgent problem. Save the Source History and Honor the Pioneer.

# The Alberta Field Force of 1885

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EDITOR—COLONEL F. C. JAMIESON, V.D., K.C., M.L.A.

PREFACE—HONOURABLE FRANK OLIVER.

THE ALBERTA FIELD FORCE OF 1885—The Assembly of the Force;  
The March on Edmonton; The Edmonton Home Guard; Preparation at  
Edmonton; From Edmonton to Victoria; Fort Pitt; Frenchman's Butte;  
Loon Lake; The Force Comes Under Middleton's Command.

APPENDIX—I Report of Ed. Hughes.

II Old Timers Who Were There.

III Report of General Strange.

IV Bibliography.

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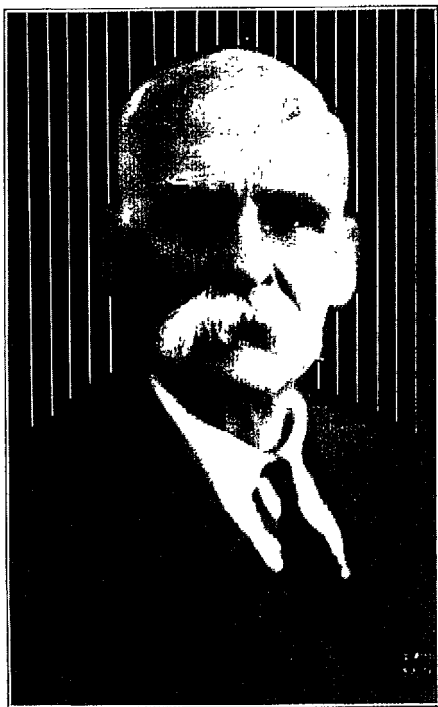
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CANADIAN NORTH-WEST HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Battleford, Saskatchewan

VOLUME I—No. 7  
1931

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HON FRANK OLIVER

## PREFACE

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It is a cause of pride to Canada that the expansion of settlement throughout her prairie west has been accomplished without friction with the native population such as has been almost an unvarying record south of the boundary line. The sole exception was the rebellion of 1885, the events of which occupied a period of not more than three months. The outbreak carried very serious possibilities. Less than twenty years had elapsed since the pioneer settlements of the adjoining State of Minnesota had been devastated under conditions of exceptional horror. Less than ten years before an important United States military force, under a leader of the highest reputation, had been annihilated in the adjoining territory of Dakota.

In the Canadian West the settlers were fewer than had been the case in Minnesota and Dakota, and being more scattered were less fortunately situated for mutual defence. There was tragedy enough in what actually occurred, but the tragedy would have been far greater had the authorities minimized the dangers of the situation or had the need for an adequate military force not been so promptly and efficiently met.

Since 1918 the tendency is to measure all military effort by the standards of the Great War. By comparison the rebellion of '85 was a small affair; but it was neither small nor unimportant to the persons immediately concerned, nor to the country for which it definitely marked the supremacy of constituted authority. Lives were sacrificed—and offered for sacrifice—in 1885 with motives as high as those which governed in the Great War. The occasion of this sacrifice is well worthy of being kept in remembrance. The story of the Alberta Field Force, compiled by Colonel Jamiésou, covers military operations in the western part of the region affected by the Rebellion and fills out the picture that would otherwise be incomplete.

FRANK OLIVER

## In Memoriam

JAMES MCKAY, Judge of the Appeal Court of Saskatchewan, was born at Fort Ellice, Manitoba, July 12, 1862. Died December 1, 1931. In 1874 he entered St. John's College, Winnipeg, subsequently attended Manitoba University, from which he graduated in 1882, taking honors in Latin and Greek. He was called to the Manitoba Bar in 1886 and began his legal practice in Prince Albert in 1887. Created Queen's Counsel in 1891. Appointed to the Supreme Court in 1914, and in 1918 to the Court of Appeal. In the Rebellion of 1885 a private in the 90th Regiment, Winnipeg, and attached to Captain French's Scouts. Organized a force to assist in the capture of Almighty Voice. A member of the Church of England. Chancellor and Registrar for the Synod of the Diocese of Saskatchewan. Member of the Masonic Order. President of the Victoria Hospital at Prince Albert. President of the Boy Scout Council, Prince Albert. Fellow of the Historical Society and continually pleaded its cause. An eminent jurist. A citizen of unfailing industry, courtesy and patience, and a kind and gentle man.

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# The Alberta Field Force 1885

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## 1. THE ASSEMBLY OF THE FORCE

Towards the end of March, 1885, the situation in the District of Alberta became very alarming to the white settlers who were chiefly in and around the villages of Edmonton, Calgary, Macleod and Lethbridge. The increasing ferment amongst Riel's followers at Batoche had resulted in Colonel Irvine, Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, being ordered to the Prince Albert-Carlton-Battleford area with every man that could be spared. Only a half dozen policemen were left at Fort Saskatchewan, the same at Calgary and a score at Macleod. There was no organized Militia in the district.

It was well known that Riel's emissaries had been active with all the bands and on every Reservation the Indians were restless. The disappearance of the buffalo seven or eight years before had changed their condition from one of ease and plenty to one of misery and want. They were thus ready to listen to those who suggested that the white man was to blame for their troubles.

The Indian population was relatively large. Near Macleod were the Bloods and the Peigans, east of Calgary the Blackfeet, west of Calgary the Sarcees and Stoneys, all fine fighting material and possessing many horses. Forty miles south of Edmonton were the Crees of Ermine skin and Bob-tail and the Stoneys of Sharp-head. Just across the Saskatchewan River from Edmonton were the Crees of the Papaschase Reserve and a few miles to the west and north-west were the Tommy le Potac, Callihoo, Alexis and Alexander Reserves, mostly Crees with a few Stoneys. A hundred miles down the Saskatchewan River were the Saddle Lake and Whitefish Lake Reserves and near Fort Pitt were the Onion Lake and Frog Lake Reserves—all Crees. At Lac la Biche were Crees and near Cold Lake, Chippewyans. At the Frog Lake Reserve as "visitors," were the band of Plain Crees headed by old Big Bear. These were restless trouble-makers who had recently returned from the American side of the line. They had refused to settle on a reserve of their own.

On the last day of March came the news of the successful attack made by the half-breeds on the Police and Prince Albert Volunteers under Major Crozier at Duck Lake, forcing the Police to concentrate at Prince Albert and Battleford, where they were virtually besieged.

Many old-timers who ought to know, including the late Lt.-Col. Justus Willson, who was with the Prince Albert Volunteers at Duck Lake, believed that Riel and his friends had planned to defer the actual outbreak until the grass would support the horses of the Indians and that Dumont's hot-headed attack at Duck Lake lost the rebels the co-operation of many powerful bands.

On the second of April the news that Big Bear's band had massacred nine white men on the Frog Lake Reserve and carried off the women and children as prisoners, struck terror into the hearts of the settlers, especially those in the Saskatchewan Valley, and those who had not already done so, rushed for safety to Edmonton, to the Mission at St. Albert, and to the Police post at Fort Saskatchewan. The Scotch half-breeds of Victoria left their homesteads and assembled on a headland on the Saskatchewan, a few miles above the Hudson's Bay post. This camp was well situated for defence.

There is not much evidence that the French half-breeds of the St. Albert and Lac la Biche settlements were at any time influenced by Riel and it seems clear that the murder of two Roman Catholic priests, Père Fafard and Père Marchand by the Indians of Big Bear's Band at Frog Lake, ended all danger from this source. In the Laboucan Settlement on the Battle River, east of the present city of Wetaskiwin, Riel had many friends. This is mentioned below in dealing with Fort Ethier.

At Edmonton a Home Guard was formed, under command of the late Major Stiff with the late Wm. Ibbotson and Mr. J. A. Mitchell, then of the Indian Department and now residing at Pakan, as Lieutenants. They garrisoned the Hudson's Bay Fort and repaired its bastions and palisades.

The response to the call for mobilization of militia units was all that could be desired and the Dominion Government

was able to send to the north-west sufficient troops to deal with the situation promptly. Winnipeg units were the first in the field.

The Minister of Militia, the late Sir Adolphe Caron, early thought of using the fine fighting material to be found amongst the cowboys of Alberta and even before the attack at Duck Lake had telegraphed to a veteran officer of the Imperial and Canadian services, then ranching near the Blackfoot Reserve east of Calgary. This was Major General Thomas Bland Strange, the central figure of the stirring events in Alberta forty-five years ago.

This officer, who died in England a few years ago at a great age, saw service in many parts of the world, including service in the Indian Mutiny. In 1871 he entered the service of the Dominion as Commander of Artillery at the Fortress of Quebec and Inspector of Artillery. He retired in 1881 with the rank of Major-General and took up ranching in Alberta as manager of the Military Colonization Company's Ranch. His story of his life, "Gunner Jingo's Jubilee" is a fascinating record of an adventurous career.

On receiving the Minister's telegram, General Strange left the ranch for Calgary and at Gleichen station received another telegram directing him to report with his corps to General Middleton at Qu'Appelle. On reaching Calgary he found great excitement and some opposition to men being enlisted for general service on the ground that all were needed for home defence. However, the cowboys came forward—splendid fellows with no military training but accustomed to handling horses and firearms and ready and willing to do what was required of them.

General Strange was now placed in command of the District of Alberta and proceeded to organize for the defence of the settlements as well as for general service.

Major Hatton, a former officer of the Canadian Militia, who had at one time been foreman on the M.C.C. Ranch, was appointed to command the Alberta Mounted Rifles, with Messrs. Dunn and Lauder, former sergeants of the Mounted Police as Lieutenants.

Inspector Steele (afterwards Major-General Sir Sam Steele) of the Mounted Police, who was on duty with a detach-

ment in connection with the building of the C.P.R. in British Columbia, was at the General's request called to Calgary and authorized to organize a corps of Scouts of which his detachment of about a score of Police, formed the nucleus. This corps the General named "Steele's Scouts." The other officers of this corps were Captain Oswald and Lieutenant Coryell, a graduate of the Royal Military College. The well-known Police figure, Sergt. Fury, was with Steele.

Major James Walker, one of the "old original" superintendents of the North-West Mounted Police, then ranching at Calgary, was appointed to command the Calgary Home Guard. Major Stewart of the Stewart Ranch raised a corps known as the Rocky Mountain Rangers, which were stationed at Fort Macleod and Lethbridge and patrolled the Reservations and ranch country along the border. His officers included the late Senator Deveber as surgeon, Captains Lord Boyle, Gilpin Brown and John Herron, Lieutenants J. R. Scott, Hon. H. Boyle, W. F. Powell, James Christie, George Ives and Charles Smith. A Home Guard was later formed at High River.

A constant exchange of telegrams between General Strange, General Middleton and Militia Headquarters was kept up. Strange was informed that the 65th Carabiniers Mount Royal, under Lieut. Col. J. A. Ouimet, M.P., and the 92nd Winnipeg Light Infantry under Lieut.-Col. W. Osborne Smith, C.M.G., were being sent to Calgary; also that the 7th Voltigeurs de Quebec would follow later.

On April 7th, a message to the General from Edmonton, signed by Messrs. J. McDougall, Hudson's Bay Chief Factor; George A. Simpson, J.P., and Donald Ross, chairman of the Defence Committee, stated that the Indians were on the war-path and asked for men and arms at once. Mowat's ride from Edmonton to Calgary with this message, changing horses frequently, and galloping the whole 200 miles, is one of the famous rides of Alberta History. On the 11th a telegram from General Middleton ordered Strange to march at once to Edmonton with whatever forces he could command. April 12th saw the arrival at Calgary of the first troops from the East—the 65th Carabiniers Mount Royal. Lt.-Col. Ouimet returned East at once, leaving the battalion under his second in command, Lt.-Col. Hughes, who had been an officer of the Headquarters Staff of Military District No. 6 (Montreal). The adjutant

was Captain Cortlandt Starnes, now Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The story of the part taken by this Battalion in the campaign was published by Charles R. Daoust, a sergeant of the unit, under the title, "*Cent-vingt Jours de Service Actif.*" Daoust says that during the evening of the 13th a runner brought in the report that a band of Indians was only two miles away. A picquet of twenty men under Captain Starnes was posted "on a neighbouring mountain." On another day a snow storm which the inhabitants of the "village" called a "chinook" drove the 65th from their tents to the shelter of the Mounted Police Barracks.

On April 17th the 92nd Winnipeg Light Infantry arrived at Calgary, under command of Lt. Col. W. Osborne Smith, C.M.G., a former commander of Military District No. 10 (Winnipeg). Capt. C. Constantine, afterwards a well-known Mounted Police Officer, was adjutant. The battalion consisted of seven companies of forty men each.

One company was left at Calgary, one at Macleod, and one at Gleichen with a detachment at Crowfoot. Four companies marched with Strange's force.

Inspector A. B. Perry, a graduate of the Royal Military College, who had served for a time as an officer of the Royal Engineers and who was afterwards Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, was given the rank of Major in the Militia and was ordered from Macleod with 20 Police and one muzzle-loading 9-pounder Field Gun—the Artillery of the Alberta Field Force. This old gun, even then a veteran, after being hauled and floated all the way to Frenchman's Butte and Beaver River, now rests with an old companion in front of the Old Timers' Cabin at Edmonton.

All of the troops which General Strange expected to arrive in Alberta at an early date were now assembled and he made plans to move on Edmonton without further delay. These plans were telegraphed to General Middleton.

Transport consisted of some Government survey cars and hired farm wagons.

General Strange tells us that the whole force, except the Mounted Police, wore soft felt hats looped up at the left side;

the 65th were in rifle green uniform, commonly called "black"; the Winnipeg Light Infantry wore scarlet jackets; the Alberta Mounted Rifles were in brown canvas "police" stable jackets, and Steele's Scouts in buckskin shirts and "Schapps." The Police at first wore their usual uniform but later put their scarlet jackets in the wagons and wore stable jackets. Police and Scouts used Mexican saddles which were late in arriving and in bad repair, causing this unit delay in leaving Calgary. Police, Scouts and Mounted Rifles had Winchester rifles, carried across the saddle in a loop attached to the horn. The Infantry used the Enfield rifle.

A veteran friend of General Strange's service in India, Captain Dale of the Madras Fusiliers, then farming in Manitoba, was made Brigade Major, and the General's son, Captain E. Bland Strange, a graduate of the Royal Military College, acted as A.D.C. Captain Wright of the 43rd Battalion, Ottawa, Captain Hamilton and Mr. Desbrisay were Supply and Transport Officers.

Surgeon-Major Pennefather was Medical Officer.

## 2. THE MARCH ON EDMONTON

This little army of horse, foot and "gun" marched on Edmonton in three echelons.

Reports had been received by the General of depredations by half-breeds and Indians at Battle River, Beaver Lake, Victoria and Saddle Lake. From the small settlement at the crossing of the Red Deer, the Gaetz and Beatty families had fled to Calgary.

Five days before the first elements of the force marched from Calgary, the General ordered Lient. Coryell and a patrol of fifteen other ranks of "Steele's Scouts" to proceed in the direction of Edmonton in advance of a party of the Red Deer settlers returning to their homes. The men of this party had been provided with arms and organized as a "Home Guard" under Mr. Beatty as Sergeant. Coryell was ordered, if he found his patrol strong enough, to secure the crossing of the Red Deer, placing the buildings in a state of defence as quickly as possible.

The Rev. John McDougall was accepted as a Volunteer and with four "mountain" Stoney from Morley was given the



job of carrying despatches to Edmonton if possible and there arranging for boat transport on the Saskatchewan River.

Canon MacKay was attached to Strange's Headquarters as Chaplain, but also served as a very efficient scout. A young Presbyterian minister from Fort Macleod also served as a chaplain with the force.

The first echelon marched from Calgary on April 20th, under command of General Strange himself. It consisted of Mounted Police and Scouts to the number of 60, under Major Steele, Nos. 2, 5, 6 and 7 companies of the 65th, under Captains des Trois-Maisons, Villeneuve, Giroux and Doherty (now the Right Hon. C. J. Doherty). This section of the 65th referred to by Daoust as "*le Bataillon Droit*" was under Lt.-Col. Hughes with the Adjutant Captain Starnes.

General Strange directed Major Steele to arrange for advance and flanking scouts and to select camp grounds; on arriving at camp ground the wagons (175 in number) were to circle until a complete corral was formed; fires were to be lighted only outside; the Cavalry was ordered to herd and guard the Cavalry and transport horses at night.

At the Battle River the column was joined by Fathers Lacombe and Scullen, who had been trying to induce the bands of Bob-tail, Ermine-skin and Sharp-head to keep the peace. The two former chiefs were presented to the General who refused to shake hands with them as they were reported to have plundered the Hudson's Bay Company's store and were considered "bad." They received a stern warning. Steele says these two chiefs were reputed to be "coffee-coolers" of the worst type.

On the 23rd the second echelon marched from Calgary under Major Perry. It consisted of his detachment of twenty Police with the field gun, Nos. 1, 3, 4 and 6 companies of the 65th under Captains Ostell, Bauset, Roy and Ethier. These companies, called by Daoust "*le Bataillon Gauche*," were commanded by Captain Robert. The march of this group is described by Daoust in great detail. It appears that there was much friction between the civilian teamsters and the men of the 65th, arising out of the old vexed question of who might ride on the wagons. It required the firm hand of Major Perry on more than one occasion to prevent serious trouble. The

crossing of the Red Deer was accomplished with difficulty as the water was high, the cable down and the ferry out of order. With great difficulty the cable was gotten across. A raft was built to be used instead of a ferry and the precious gun placed thereon, escorted by Major Perry and several soldiers. As the raft was pushed out from shore it was caught in the strong current, the ropes broke and away went the raft down stream towards a dangerous rapid about four miles below. Men ran along the bank trying to throw ropes to the Major on the raft. When nearly three miles down stream, Major Perry, by jumping into the water, managed to seize a rope and regain the raft. It was hauled ashore beside a cut-bank and the gun had to be hoisted up in parts. The trails were soft and the difficulty of hauling the gun and wagons was at times very great. The late James E. Green of Edmonton, who was a Police Corporal with Perry, told the writer that they spent nearly a day in crossing the Blackmud Valley.

Twenty men of No. 8 Company, 65th, under Lieut. Normandeau, were ordered to remain as a guard at the Crossing of the Red Deer and to construct a "fort" or strong-point. Daoust gives a drawing and description of "Fort Normandeau" which this detachment built. It consisted of a large log house, loop-holed, with a surrounding palisade, and moat. An elaborate description of this fort, which seems to have been very well built, is given in the Edmonton Bulletin of July 4th, 1885, which also contains a description of "Fort Ostell," constructed at the Battle River, and also a description of "Fort Ethier" at the Government Farm at the crossing of Pipestone Creek.

As Perry's Command passed the Pipestone, orders were received to establish the post at that point. Lieut. Villeneuve and twenty other ranks of the 65th were accordingly assigned to this duty. A palisade and trench surrounded the buildings and a strong log bastion was built after the model of a bastion on St. Helen's Island at Montreal. This bastion has been carefully preserved by Mr. Frank Lucas, owner of the property. In the fall of 1923 the Alberta Historical Society, on behalf of the 65th Regiment, presented Mr. Lucas with a replica of the home-made Union Jack flown by the original garrison of "Fort Ethier."

The third group, having been delayed awaiting the arrival of saddlery for the Alberta Mounted Rifles and for the comple-

tion of transport arrangements, marched under command of Lt.-Col. W. Osborne Smith, C.M.G. It consisted of the Winnipeg Light Infantry (4 companies) and transport. Orders were issued to leave a detachment of the Alberta Mounted Rifles under Lieut. Dunn to patrol the Calgary-Edmonton Trail.

General Strange with his first echelon reached Edmonton on May 1st, having made the march of 200 miles from Calgary in 10 days. Before crossing the Saskatchewan, No. 7 Company of the 65th, under Captain Doherty, was ordered to proceed via Clover Bar and report to Major A. H. Griesbach, in command of the Police Post at Fort Saskatchewan and of the Edmonton area.

The General described his first sight of Edmonton, "The scattered little town of Edmonton peeping through clumps of pine and poplar, the blue sky and brilliant sunshine gilding the grey old stockades of the Hudson's Bay Fort with its quaint bastions and buildings crowning the steep bank over the broad swift sweep of the Saskatchewan," as a sight that lingered long in his memory.

After crossing the river on John Walter's ferry, the little army was formed up and was led bravely up the hill to the South Gate of the Fort, while a salute was fired from the company's three brass cannon served by the Edmonton Home Guard.

A small boy spectator (now Major General the Hon. W. A. Griesbach) remembers that General Strange, a handsome big man with a huge beard, rode a beautiful chestnut horse, wore a soft felt hat turned up at the side, the military garment known as a "frock coat," and a big sword. To the greatly relieved people of Edmonton and vicinity, gathered at the Fort, he and his men represented safety and the power of law and order.

### 3. THE EDMONTON HOME GUARD

The Edmonton Home Guard who had "held the fort" were now disbanded and publicly thanked by the General for their services. Some of the men enlisted in Steele's Scouts and others in the Edmonton Rifle Company which was formed at a later date.

The following information regarding the Edmonton Home Guard has been given to the writer by Mr. John A. Mitchell,

one of the officers, now residing at Pákan, and by Mr. Kenneth A. McLeod, a sergeant of the Guard. It was formed on receipt of the news of the Frog Lake massacre. The officers were Major William Stiff, Retired List Canadian Militia, in command; Lieut. William G. Ibbotson, Retired List Canadian Militia, and Lieut. John A. Mitchell, attached to the Edmonton Indian Agency. The total strength was about thirty. The guard proceeded to occupy Fort Edmonton and made use of the arms found in the Armoury. These consisted of three small brass cannon and about a dozen muzzle-loading muskets of the type in use in the army at the time of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. There was no ammunition on hand. Some of the men of the Guard were set at work moulding lead balls. These were not round but cylindrical with a conical point and a groove at the base to which a gauze sack of powder was attached. The women made up these sacks and also helped in moulding the lead balls and in fastening the powder sacks to them. Mrs. Mitchell and Mrs. Charles Sutter were particularly active. The ball and powder sack constituting the "load," were placed in the barrel of the musket and rammed down without a "wad." A few members of the guard had private rifles, but some had no fire-arms, not even shot-guns. Each man had a "brush-hook" as a reserve weapon.

The bastions and stockades of the Fort had been allowed to get into disrepair and had to be renewed. The "Big House" was outside the stockade.

The members of the Guard slept in the Hudson's Bay bunk-house. At first the men were on duty continuously, but later attended to their own work during the day and were on duty during the nights.

A steam engine and line of hose was secured and placed in the Fort plaza near the well for use in case of probable employment of "fire-arrows" by the Indians.

There was always a sentry at the gate which faced the river. A line of sentries extended from the Fort eastward to the Edmonton Hotel (Donald Ross' Hotel which stood at the base of the hill on 101st Street), thence up the hill and across the Hudson's Bay Reserve along or near what is now Jasper Avenue and thence back to the Fort. Later, some rifle pits were dug on the St. Albert Trail, near where the Misericordia Hospital now stands. The brush was cleared from a zone

around the Fort. A plan of defence was drawn up and special "sharpshooters" were detailed for the three bastions. The sergeants in charge of the bastions were Kenneth A. McLeod, James McDonald, and John S. Edmonton. It was realized that the Fort could be fired into from the higher ground where the Parliament Buildings now stand, but it was not considered wise to attempt to construct a new fort on a better site. There were several alarms but no hostiles appeared.

#### 4. PREPARATIONS AT EDMONTON

The reader will remember that there were now three "forts" or strong-points on the lines of communication between Calgary and Edmonton—Fort Normandeau at the Red Deer River, Fort Ostell at the Battle River and Fort Ethier at the Pipestone Creek. There were also the patrols of Alberta Mounted Rifles under Lieut. Dunn. A despatch rider service and supply service by means of wagon trains were organized.

The group commanded by Major Perry reached Edmonton on May 5th and the third group, commanded by Lt.-Col. W. Osborne Smith, C.M.G., arrived on the 10th.

A large scow, 100 feet by 25 feet, was requisitioned from the Hudson's Bay Company, and four smaller scows, construction of which had been commenced on Rev. John McDougall's arrival at Edmonton, were rushed to completion. General Strange states that a ferry in use at Clover, with wire cable, was purchased and taken along, so that if required the cable could be stretched across the river and a "cable-swing-ferry" operated to transfer troops rapidly across the river.

A specially built scow had a platform for the gun and barrels and sacks of pork, beef, flour and other supplies were piled around the sides of the scow as "armour." On account of the lack of space the gun was lashed, the whole scow taking the recoil and the gun was transversed by pointing the whole scow—the same principle was used in the Great War by air-pilots in firing their machine guns.

This gunboat was named the "Big Bear" by the lads of the 65th and was no doubt the first warship in Alberta waters.

Some feared that the scows were not "sea-worthy" and Colonel Osborne Smith requested a Board of Enquiry. The

Board was authorized and several witnesses were examined. These witnesses satisfied the Board that the scows were safe.

Some Edmonton men possessing special qualifications were enlisted in Steele's Scouts. These included Troopers W. D. Patton, Wm. Ibbotson, W. Stiff, J. Beldon, J. A. Petrie, W. F. Spearin, F. Walters, W. R. West (Bill West), G. E. White, P. Young, Alex. Rowland, J. Rowland, F. Rowland, C. Whitford, J. Calder and others.

As the supply of case-shot for the field gun was very small, bags were filled with trade balls from the Hudson's Bay Store and proved satisfactory.

The wagon transport of the force was reorganized at Edmonton, many settlers in the vicinity being engaged with their teams. The teamsters were armed with "Snider" rifles. Extra supplies and forage were obtained but as the grass was beginning to grow not much hay was carried, but oats had to be provided for cavalry and transport horses.

Colonel Ouimet arrived at Edmonton before the force moved east, and took up his headquarters in the Fort, where No. 2 Company of the 65th was left in garrison.

Prominent citizens of Edmonton wrote a formal protest to General Strange that the garrison of one company left there was not sufficient, but the General refused to further weaken his small column. A little later Lt.-Col. Ouimet obtained the organization of the St. Albert Mounted Rifles, commanded by Captain Sam Cunningham, a prominent Metis, afterwards a member of the North-West Council, with Lieut. Daniel Maloney, a prominent settler, afterwards a member of the North-West Legislature, and Lieut. Octave Bellerose, a prominent Metis. Later, No. 7 Company of the Winnipeg Light Infantry, commanded by Captain MacIntosh, arrived from Southern Alberta, and remained in garrison at Edmonton.

#### 5. FROM EDMONTON TO VICTORIA

General Strange moved by "bounds" and his next objective was Victoria.

The first elements left Edmonton, by the old Fort Pitt trail on May 5th, and consisted of Major Steele in command with Steele's Scouts and Nos. 5 and 6 Companies of the 65th. Daoust notes that two prominent settlers were met near Fort

Saskatchewan and that these men said that the Halfbreeds and Indians had right on their side and that it would take an army of twenty thousand men to put down the rebellion; that the Halfbreeds had gone too far in revolt to retreat and would sell their lives dearly.

The second group consisted of Nos. 3 and 4 Companies of the 65th under Lt.-Col. Hughes, who marched from Edmonton on May 8th and caught up with Major Steele at Deep Creek.

On May 10th the combined groups under Lt.-Col. Hughes marched again and arrived in Victoria on the afternoon of the 11th.

On May 16th the flotilla of boats having on board General Strange and his staff, Major Perry and his Police with the field gun, also the Winnipeg Light Infantry under Colonel Osborne Smith, arrived at Victoria. The flotilla had made a safe voyage, preceded by scouts in canoes. The scows simply "floated down the river."

A Home Guard was enrolled at Victoria under command of the Rev. A. McLachlan, a Methodist missionary, and arrangements made to repair the stockade of the old Hudson's Bay Fort and put the place in a state of defence. Rations were supplied to be issued to the settlers. General Strange states that a half company of the 65th were left in garrison.

The whole force (except the Alberta Mounted Rifles) was now assembled in one camp and plans were made for the advance into the area where contact with the enemy might be expected. The general plan of campaign as sanctioned by General Middleton was that Strange's troops, going down the river and Middleton's troops coming up the river, should get into communication and attack Big Bear or Poundmaker (or both together, as was believed probable) in a joint operation.

Strange says that he felt obliged to proceed although disappointed that the remaining companies of the Winnipeg Light Infantry had not been pushed forward more quickly than they were, to be followed by the 9th Voltigeurs of Quebec under Lieut.-Col. Amyot, who were in turn to have been replaced in garrison duty in the southern part of the district by the Montreal Garrison Artillery (serving as infantry). This latter unit was actually stationed at Regina.

An unsuccessful effort was made to get Chief Pakan of the Whitefish Reserve to provide some scouts for the force.

On the 17th, Major Steele with Steele's Scouts moved on to Saddle Lake, preceded by an advance party under Lieut. Coryell, who seems to have been getting jobs of this sort very often.

On the 20th, the force left Victoria. The Winnipeg Light Infantry exchanged places with the 65th, who embarked in the boats. The men proceeded to name these "Big Bear," "Nancy," "Bauset" and "Roy du Bord." On May 23, the Alberta Mounted Rifles caught up with the force at Dog Rump Creek.

Standing orders for the force repeated the direction that the wagons were to be coralled in a circle in case of attack at night; no tents or "truck of any kind" allowed within the corral; headquarters and units were to pitch their tents in a single line outside the corral and near their own wagons.

On the night of the 22nd, some shots were heard on the shore and the whole of the 65th was speedily under arms, went ashore, climbed the bank, and deployed. After the neighbourhood had been patrolled thoroughly and no enemy found, the troops returned to the boats, but thereafter bivouacked on land at night.

On Sunday, the 24th of May, the scows were tied up at the mouth of the Frog Lake Creek. Mass was celebrated on board one of the boats. From now on the land column and the flotilla kept in close touch with each other. At Moose Hills Creek information was received that a large band of Indians was near Fort Pitt. The field gun was landed and the force proceeded with great caution. Fort Pitt was reached on the 25th. It was a smoking ruin, deserted by its former Police garrison. At Frog Lake Lieut. Coryell's patrol (including the three Rowlands, W. R. West and Calder) found the bodies of the victims of the massacre. The bodies of the two priests were in the cellar of a house which had been burned. The other bodies were lying on the ground where they had fallen. One man's dog was dead across his knees. The bodies were buried, Canon MacKay reading a funeral service.



## 6. FORT PITT

The story of the defence of the post by Inspector Dickens (son of the famous novelist), and his Police is that he had withdrawn his detachment from Frog Lake Reserve, the scene of the revolting massacre, at the request of the Agent, shortly before the tragedy, which occurred immediately after the Big Bear bands heard of the Duck Lake fight. The whole force of Police under Inspector Dickens had then proceeded to strengthen the Fort, which consisted of some five buildings without a palisade, and by building such fences and barriers as they could and pulling down outlying shacks. and windows were barricaded and loop holes made in the walls. Dickens had a number of civilians to protect, including women and children, and had sent a message to Battleford asking for a reinforcement of fifty men but got no reply, the bearer having been intercepted. The Fort was now invested by Big Bear's band, who camped just out of range on the high ground to the north, having with them as prisoner Halpin and others. Big Bear demanded the surrender of all arms and ammunition and privately sent word to Mr. McLean, the senior Hudson's Bay Company representative, asking that some blankets be put aside for him, saying that he was an old man and that when the Fort was taken his young men would get everything. Mr. McLean went out to parley with the Indians, thinking he might induce them to keep the peace, but was treacherously taken prisoner. Strange to say, McLean sent in word for his family to join him, and they went accompanied by all the civilians in the post. They became prisoners of the Indians and were dragged around the country for weeks before they were finally released. They were often threatened with murder and were in danger from General Strange's gun fire at the battle of Frenchman's Butte. Their safety was largely due to the friendly attitude of some Wood Crees with Big Bear.

Constables Cowan, Loasby and Quinn, who had been sent out on patrol to Frog Lake, in returning discovered the Indians between them and the Fort. Cowan and Loasby decided to ride through but the Crees opened fire, killing Cowan and wounding Loasby. The garrison of the Fort then opened a heavy fire on the Indians and Loasby managed to crawl to safety. Quinn escaped for the moment, but later fell into the hands of the Indians.

Seeing it was useless to remain, Dickens embarked his little command on a scow during the night and escaped to Battleford.

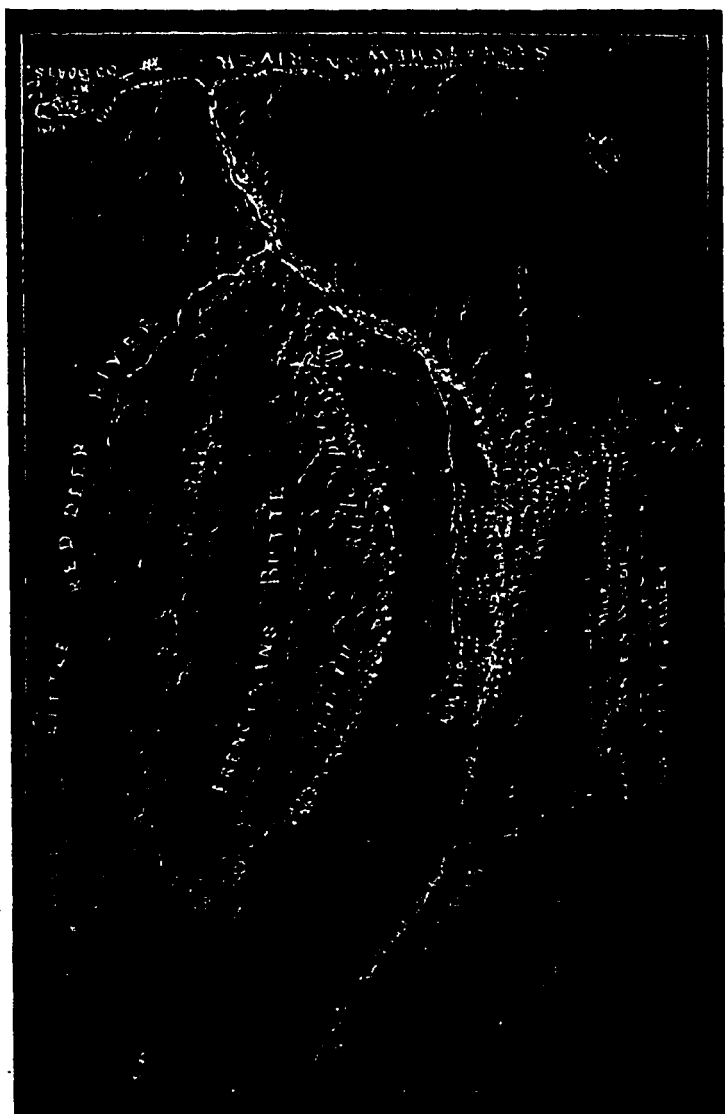
When the troops arrived they gave Constable Cowan's mutilated body a military funeral. His heart had been cut out and stuck on a stick. His body was removed a few years ago by Mr. Lovell and Sergt. Hall of Onion Lake to the Military Cemetery at the foot of the Cairn erected by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board at Frog Lake, to mark the scene of the massacre.

#### 7. FRENCHMAN'S BUTTE

On the night of May 25, the Force camped on the high ground north of the ruins of Fort Pitt. All of the mounted troops were assigned to the task of discovering the trail the Indians had taken with their white prisoners, while an infantry fatigue party was set to work repairing what was left of the buildings and palisades of the Fort.

Major Perry and his Police without their field gun, accompanied by Canon MacKay and Rev. John McDougall, both accomplished scouts, born in the country, were ferried across to the south side of the Saskatchewan. On finding some signs that the Indians and their prisoners had crossed, this party followed the trail, believing that Big Bear and his Indians had set out to join Poundmaker near Battleford. This proved a "false scent" however, and although Perry searched the country as far as Battleford, he got no information of the enemy. Steele, with about 100 cavalry, examined trails on the north side of the river and finally picked up a heavy trail leading east.

With the General's approval, Steele followed the trail, and near midnight found himself on the high bank of the river about three miles east of Fort Pitt. While halted and looking about for a place to bivouac, the Major was fired upon at close quarters by an Indian lying in the grass. The Indian then sprang up and tried to reach his horse, but was, as Steele says, brought down by a shot from Corp. McLelland of the Police. Immediately heavy firing broke out from Steele's men and concealed Indians. This lasted only a few minutes, when the small band of Indians galloped off towards the east. Steele says the band he encountered was an outpost and probably in-



FRENCHMAN'S BUTTE

tended to stampede his horses when his men had got into their blankets.

This incident was reported to General Strange and Steele's men bivouacked for the night. Next morning the trail to the east was followed. In a short time the advanced scouts under Whitford of Edmonton were driven in by a large band of yelling braves. These, however, on seeing the main body, cleared out towards the east.

Shortly after this incident General Strange appeared with the Winnipeg Light Infantry, the remainder of the Alberta Mounted Rifles under Major Hatton, and the field gun manned by an infantry crew, under Captain E. Bland Strange, A.D.C., and Sergt. O'Connor of the Mounted Police. The infantry were in wagons. The 65th Bn., to the number of about 100, under Lt.-Col. Hughes, had been embarked on the "Big Bear," with orders to land when they saw the signal of a white flag displayed on the "mountain" (high bank). One company of the 65th had been left to repair and garrison Fort Pitt. Daoust says the repair was accomplished in 14 hours of work.

On reaching Major Steele, the wagons were formed into a corral, under Major Wright of the 43rd Regiment. The drivers, being armed, acted as a transport guard. The march was then resumed, and about four miles further on touch was gained with the enemy again. The Indians were on a ridge and on a bare summit on the left front of the force a fine band was galloping in a circle, giving the "Red Book" signal to their main body, "enemy in sight." General Strange deployed his force and advanced. The cavalry dismounted and were deployed on the left, the Winnipeg Light Infantry on the right. On advancing no serious opposition was encountered. Both Strange and Steele noted the extreme difficulty of keeping touch while advancing in the thick poplar woods.

The field gun was brought into action and opened on this cavalcade, which at once moved off east towards Frenchmen's Butte. The 65th had come up just in time to fire a few rounds at the retreating cavalcade.

The advanced scouts kept in touch with the Indians which Steele says could be seen before dark, moving up the slopes of the well-known old-time landmark, "Frenchman's Butte"—Steele had seen it last in 1876 and remarks that it

had become largely covered with trees in the meantime. The Indians had camped near the foot of the Butte with a "lookout" on the summit, until their outposts were driven in by the troops. They then moved to the coulee where the battle took place.

Strange remarks that the 65th had neither blankets, great coats, nor rations for the night, and that their comrades of the Winnipeg Light Infantry had but short rations to share with them. A corral was formed as usual and the men were extended to cover its whole circumference. Our advanced outposts could see Indian fires, probably of outpost detachments, during the night.

On the morning of the 28th, the Force advanced along the Indians' trail, preceded by the cavalry dismounted, forming an advanced guard with patrols on and to the right and left of the line of advance. The infantry were on the trail, the 65th leading, then the field gun; then an infantry escort; and then the wagons; all on the trail. The Indian camp ground with remains of a Sacred Lodge was passed. The numbers of tepee circles led the General and his experienced Scouts to believe that at least 600 warriors were in front of them.

The trail turned to the north of Frenchman's Butte and about 6.30 the column reached the south bank of a coulee or ravine about a mile and a half from the Butte, which was the scene of the engagement usually known as Frenchman's Butte, but which is referred to by some Old Timers as "Stand-off-Coulee." It might more accurately, but much less picturesquely, be called the "Battle of the North East quarter of Section 35, Township 53, Range 25, West of the 3rd Meridian." Curiously enough the operations constituting the engagement fitted rather neatly into what is now the quarter section mentioned. In the bottom of this ravine, which is about 150 feet deep and about 600 yards wide, runs a small stream, a tributary of the Little Red Deer. On the south side the slopes were steep and covered with trees; the stream had overflowed its banks, which were soft and swampy; the north slope of the ravine was a bare glacis of about 500 yards and the top of the bank was covered with woods.

The trail led to the right down the hill, across the creek, to the right up the slope and then sharply to the left up a small tributary coulee, and into the woods to the north of the ravine.

The position is about four miles from the Saskatchewan River. Field glasses showed Strange and his officers Indian rifle-pits in the edge of the woods on the north bank. There had evidently been a camp in the bottom of the ravine the previous night but no movement was seen and not a sound came from the hostile position.

The Force was deployed in the woods and the wagons corralled in a small open space to the right. The field gun went into action at the point where the trail led down over the edge of the bank. Steele's Police and Scouts, which advanced on foot, were deployed to the left, the 65th in the centre with two companies of the Winnipeg Light Infantry next to them and the Alberta Mounted Rifles, dismounted, covered the right flank. Two companies of the Winnipeg Light Infantry under Colonel Osborne Smith were held in reserve on the hill. The line extended and moved down the hill to the willows along the creek, drawing a heavy rifle fire from the whole line of Indian trenches. The troops took cover and returned the Indian's fire. Daoust says that the heroic young priest Père Provost, O.M.I., Chaplain of the 65th, accompanied the advance of the men of that Battalion, wearing his white surplice, ready to administer the last sacrament of the Church to any who might be wounded. Two men of the 65th were wounded, Ptes. Marcotte and Le May. The General himself helped to carry the latter to a place of safety; Const. J. McRea of the Mounted Police was also wounded. Captain Strange, in command of the gun, tried shrapnel, which appeared to have little effect, but made good practice with common shell with percussion fuses although the range was very short. The creek was a serious obstacle but some men crossed and no doubt all could have done so. However, those who did were met with a murderous fire from the Indians' Winchester rifles, on emerging from the willows, and the General realized that an assault up the bare slope was too desperate to be attempted.

General Strange's official report of this engagement states that he directed Major Steele to get his men mounted and reconnoitre the right of the Indian position, and that the 65th extended to the left to occupy the space left vacant. Steele got his men mounted and moved to the left; after a considerable delay he reported that the Indian position extended for about a mile and a half, protected by bogs and muskegs along the course of the stream. It has since been learned from the

Indians that "Wandering Spirit," the head war chief under Big Bear, observed Steele's movement and moved a party on a parallel route, occasionally sending bursts of fire in his direction and ready to protect the Indian right flank in case of any attempt to turn it. The same chief was responsible for laying out and completing the trenches which had been hastily dug by the Indians and some of the prisoners.

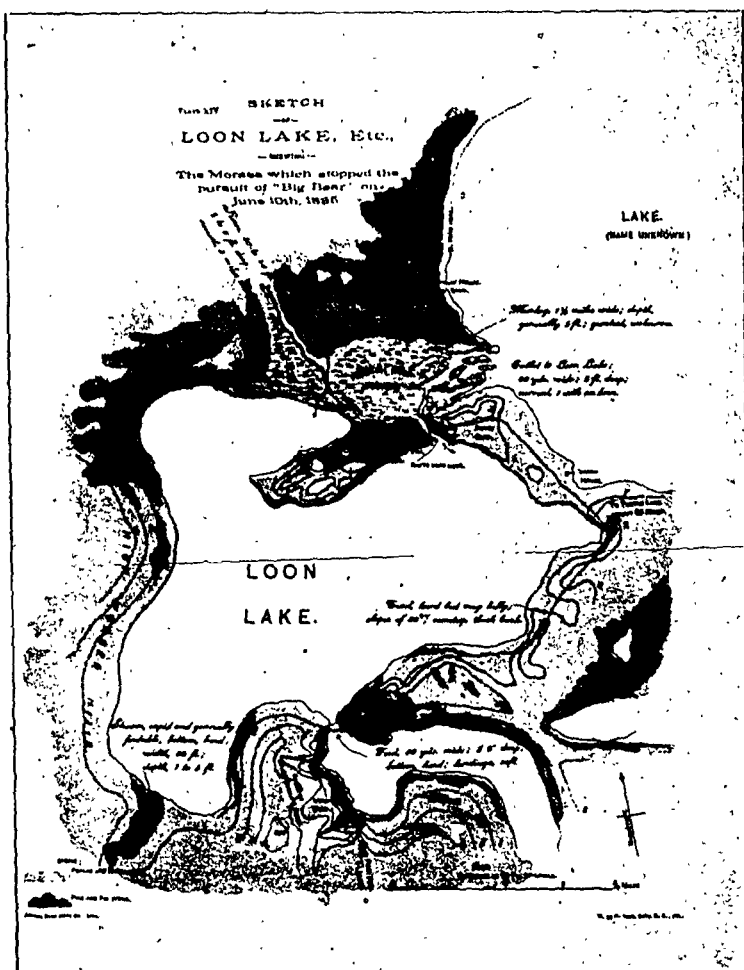
Steele's report and the knowledge that the Indians in front of him outnumbered his force three to one, together with a report from Major Hatton that some of the enemy had got round his right flank and were firing into the wagon corral, determined General Strange to retire clear of the woods and this was accordingly done. Steele's Scouts covered the retirement, the field gun keeping up as rapid a fire as possible. The muzzle loading 9-pounder with its volunteer crew could not of course lay down a very heavy barrage.

Upon completion of this retirement a conference of senior officers was held, and although the General favoured an attack on the Indian right he did not insist on this being carried out and a further retirement of about 6 miles was made to open ground where the wagons were corralled and the horses grazed. The 65th found that the pilot on hearing the heavy firing had taken their scow behind an island and found the current too strong for a return up stream. Eventually the scow went on down to Battleford with their blankets, great coats and rations. The whole Force was back at Fort Pitt by nightfall.

The reader must remember that General Strange had not established communication with General Middleton's troops and that there was no possibility of his being reinforced. He was in the vast wilderness, hundreds of miles from anywhere, facing a well armed Indian force which he believed outnumbered his troops three to one. As he had often said he had no notion of "committing Custer."

#### 8. LOON LAKE

Major Perry with his score of Police, Canon MacKay and the Rev. John McDougall had left Battleford on board a steamer in charge of Mr. Bedson to return to Fort Pitt. When about half way up despatch-bearers in a canoe were met who gave the news of the fight at Frenchman's Butte. Major Perry landed his party and proceeded by trail while the steamer returned to Battleford for orders.



On May 31st the Alberta Field Force again moved out from Fort Pitt and on June 1st occupied the Indian position north of the coulee. An examination of the trails proved that the Indians had moved off in a northeasterly direction. They had abandoned many wagons and cars and also very valuable furs. Much of the loot of Fort Pitt was found lying on the ground. Many of the wagons and carts could not be moved and were burned.



The drawing given in General Strange's Book (1) of the Indian position does not correctly show the elaborate system of trenches on their left flank. These are, however, accurately described in the text as "the large trenches on the enemy's left flank, commanding the trail approaching their position, formed a formidable ambuscade." These trenches may be seen today, four lines of them, in the bush flanking the trail leading up the small coulee from the main ravine. Why were they dug there by orders of Wandering Spirit and Little Poplar? Were they intended as a flank defence or as an ambush? As the Canadian North-West Historical Society has been given custody of this battlefield the trenches will be preserved and future generations of visitors will try to fathom the mind of the Indian warrior by means of these "documents." Fortunately, notwithstanding forty-five years of rain and snow and tramping of stock the trenches are in a perfect state of preservation.

General Strange now ordered Steele to pursue Big Bear with such mounted troops as were at hand, about 60 in all. Without doubt this was the proper thing to do but also without doubt the decision was hastened by the information that General Middleton's steamer had arrived at Fort Pitt. Steele says that as the little force—20 Police, 20 Steele's Scouts and 20 Alberta Mounted Rifles—surely the smallest Cavalry Brigade that ever pursued a fleeing foe, moved off, a staff officer conveyed to Major Hatton of the Alberta Mounted Rifles an order to return to Fort Pitt—and that Hatton was so disgusted at losing the chance to participate in the sporting dash after Big Bear that he actually wept.

Steele was assured that the mounted troops arriving with General Middleton would be sent on to support him and he moved off without much in the way of ammunition or supplies and no transport—not even pack transport.

By noon of June 2nd, Steele was in touch with Indians who showed themselves across a meadow. Steele galloped at them with his whole squadron, only to find them a small rear guard who disappeared into the forest. Trooper Fisk of Steele's Scouts was shot out of his saddle with a severe wound and Trooper Peterson of Steele's Scouts was slightly wounded.

On resuming the march early on the morning of June 3rd, the advance guard from high ground overlooking Loon Lake



Site of Big Bear's Camp, when he was surprised by Col. Steele in 1885



This is what Middleton called miles of morass, north of Loon Lake narrows.

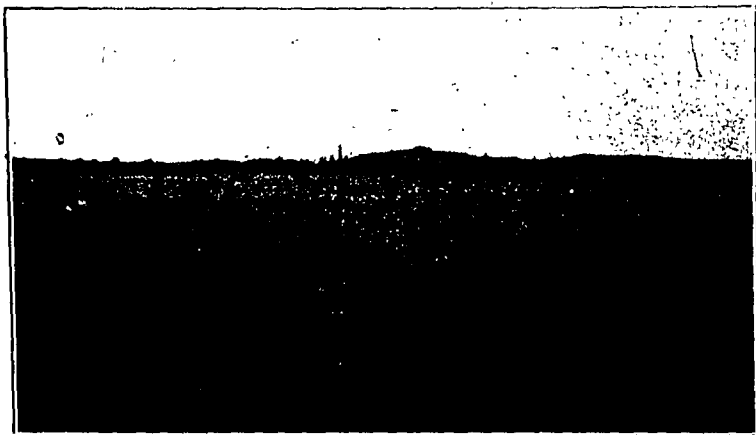
signalled the enemy in sight. Looking north from this Steele saw a beautiful lake with a peninsula extending out from the south-east shore. Horses and carts were fording the narrows to this peninsula which was high and wooded. In the foreground were some tepees with squaws excitedly preparing to leave. An ambushade was suspected and Steele's men dismounted and advanced with great caution. Teamster Billy Fielders with his friend Trooper Bill West of Steele's Scouts were the first to uncover the ambushade, the former "getting" the first Indian at close quarters. A brisk fire broke out on all sides. The Indians tried to turn the cavalry's left flank but were met by a determined party under Sergt.-Major Fury of the Mounted Police and were pushed back to the ford. Fury and West were severely wounded in this movement.

Presently Steele became aware that the Indians had succeeded in getting their whole force across the ford to the peninsula and were delivering a strong fire from concealed positions in the woods. Steele, seeing that it would be madness to attempt to force the ford in the face of such strong opposition and that he had not men enough to attempt a flanking movement by his right, retired his command to the top of the ridge. He then called on Canon MacKay, the very militant churchman, to shout a message in Cree to the Indians, advising them to give up the prisoners, but the only reply was a dangerous volley. The engagement lasted two hours. One of the Indians killed in this fight was a well-known Wood Cree Chief named "Cut-Arm."

Steele now decided to retire on the supporting troops and next morning met General Middleton with 50 Mounted Police under Colonel Herchmer, 40 Dennis Scouts, commanded by Capt. Dennis, now Colonel G. Dennis, C.M.G., 60 Boulton's Scouts, and 20 Brittlebank's Scouts with one gun of "A" Battery and one "Gatling-gun," with one infantry company from each of the Grenadiers, Midlands and 90th. The infantry was ordered back to Fort Pitt and General Middleton determined to follow Big Bear with his Mounted Troops, his field gun and the "Gatling," taking Steele's little command along with him.

#### 9. THE FORCE COMES UNDER MIDDLETON'S COMMAND

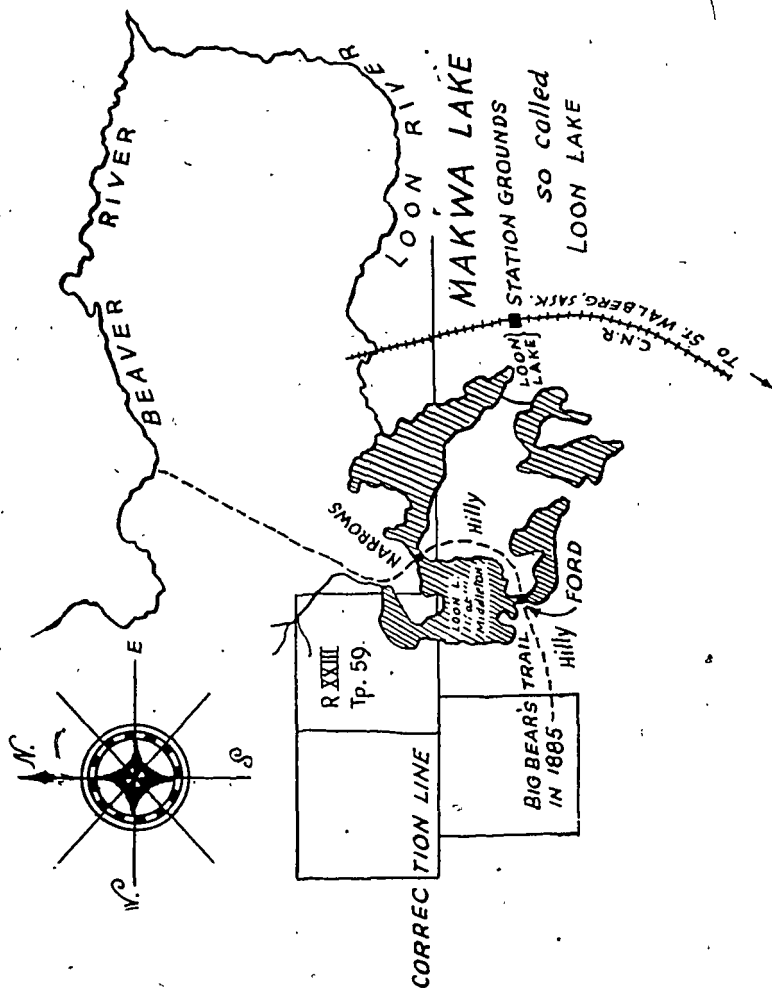
Realizing that the Indians would turn east or west General Middleton arranged for four other columns beside his



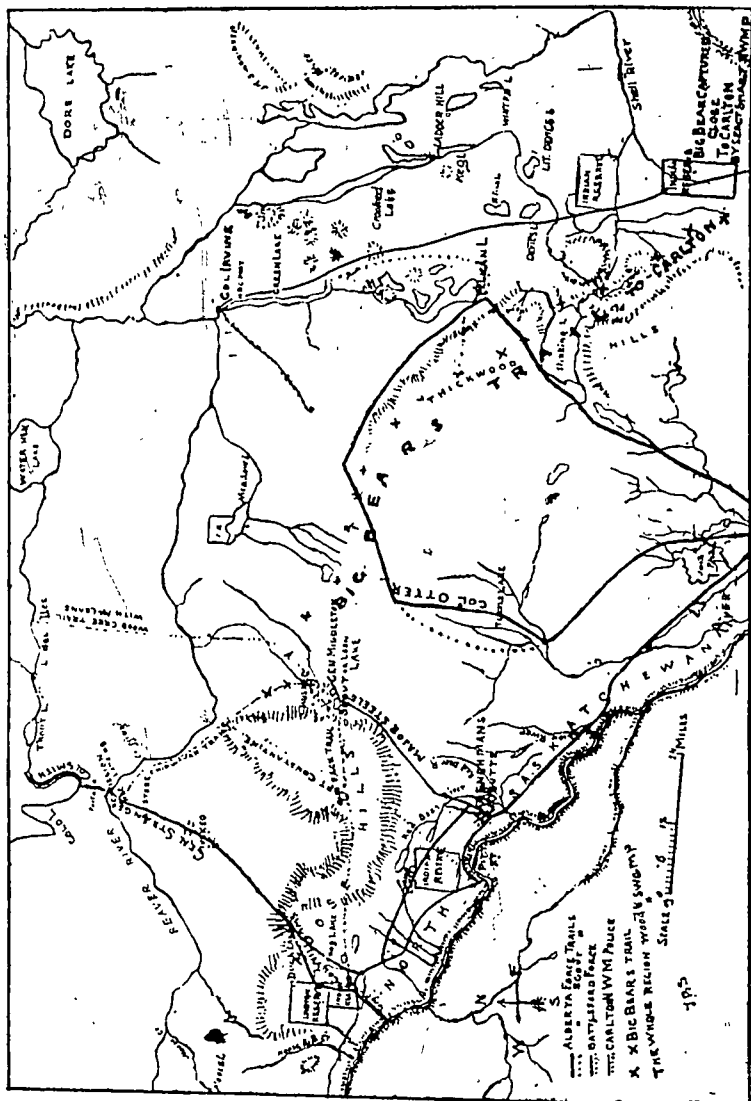
The Morass and Site on hill of Middleton's and Steele's last Camp in the Chase of Big Bear in 1885

own mounted command to go north—Colonel Irvine with North-West Mounted Police from Prince Albert to Green Lake, Colonel Otter from Battleford to Turtle Lake, General Strange with the Alberta Field Force, minus Steele's Cavalry, by way of Onion Lake and Frog Lake to the Beaver River at Le Goff on the Chippewyan Reserve, and the St. Albert Mounted Rifles, under Captain Sam Cunningham with Captain des Georges of the 65th as Staff Officer, representing headquarters to Lac la Biche. General Middleton marched to Loon Lake, intending to proceed to the Beaver River, which runs easterly, roughly parallel to the Saskatchewan. He was stopped, however by an impassable muskeg at the north end of Loon Lake, which had thawed since the Indians crossed. He retraced his route and followed Strange to the Beaver River at Le Goff. One hundred of the Winnipeg Light Infantry were sent to Cold Lake under Colonel Osborne Smith.

The Chippewyans had returned to their Reserve and claimed to have left Big Bear before the fight at Frenchman's Butte, having purchased their release by giving up forty head of cattle. The Wood Crees had separated from Big Bear shortly after the fight at Loon Lake, taking the prisoners north with them, while Big Bear and his Plain Crees moved east in the direction of Turtle Lake. A half dozen of the prisoners had escaped after the fight at Frenchman's Butte and an Indian scout now brought in word that the Wood Crees had



released their prisoners north of the Beaver River near Lac des Isles, but left them to make their way back to Fort Pitt by way of Loon Lake, about a hundred miles, without any supply of food. They were forced to exist on such game as they were able to take. General Middleton now ordered all troops back to Fort Pitt. From this place he sent out food and blankets for the prisoners by Mr. Bedson, who met them near Loon Lake. Big Bear eventually turned south between Otter's and



Irvine's Columns and crossed the Saskatchewan a short distance west of Carlton, where he surrendered to the Police, after learning from the half-breeds of the collapse of the rebellion.

The Alberta Field Force was broken up at Fort Pitt, the infantry going down the river in steamers, the Mounted Police mostly to the Battleford post, and Steele's Scouts and the Alberta Mounted Rifles to Edmonton and Calgary.

#### 10. THE ST. ALBERT MOUNTED RIFLES

A word as to St. Albert Mounted Rifles. This little squadron of about sixty, all ranks, rode to the Mission at Lac la Biche by way of Victoria and Whitefish Lake. The men provided their own horses and saddlery and were issued with "Snider" rifles. No uniforms were issued. Transport consisted of Red River carts. The march from Edmonton occupied about a week. They used one of the Mission buildings at Lac la Biche as a barracks. The time was occupied with patrols, picquets, drill and rifle practice. The reserves were patrolled and watched. It appears that before their arrival, Big Bear had sent a half dozen emissaries to excite the Indians at Beaver Lake (near Lac la Biche) to rise and the news was speedily passed to the Lac la Biche Indians, who looted the Hudson's Bay Company's store. The leading half-breeds went to the west end of the lake for safety. Later Big Bear's messengers and some Indians from Beaver Lake Reserve picked up anything that was left at the company's store. When Mr. Harrison Young of the Hudson's Bay Company arrived from Edmonton some of the goods were returned.

There were several rumors that Big Bear's band was heading for Lac la Biche, and the little garrison was constantly kept on the alert.

The St. Albert Mounted Rifles returned to Edmonton early in July and their arms were turned in to the store at Fort Saskatchewan in September.

# Appendix

## I. ED. HUGHES' REPORT

LOON LAKE, SASK., NOV. 7, 1931.

DEAR MR. CAMPBELL INNES:

Promised you that I would look up Chief Big Bear's trail in this district, is now almost ancient history. However, time has been not too plentiful, when work called elsewhere, and delay has been most regrettable.

Took several parties over and explored Loon Lake Narrows. The Ford, as Middleton calls it, and Big Bear's trail to the north of the narrows beyond the morass and also to the south beyond the Ford.

Big Bear's Trail is yet distinguishable in spots, it can be followed with ease. It is well tramped down but not in use now at this point. It follows high land and well located where followed, even north of the lake across the so-called morass it has a hard bottom. The extent of this morass is exaggerated, well and over above what it actually is. The trail is the most logical route to the Beaver River from this point and the shortest.

The sketches of Middleton's report are remarkably correct, distance is overestimated, but the shape and description can be followed with ease.

This country has an historic interest coupled with the scenic value of this lake country, the fishing and hunting. The sandy beaches and the high temperatures of these waters in summer encourage much bathing by the country people and tourists that come to these parts. The fact that Big Bear's trail is located here is proof that a highway is feasible to the west and north of Loon Lake Narrows, and this is now becoming an actual thing. Work is in progress now to have this an accomplished fact.

Am sending you a sketch, showing the trail as found and answers the description of Middleton's account of it, with points of interest. Some photographs taken to show the actual picturesque scenes. Films are preserved and if these and others lately taken are of value, you are certainly welcome to them.

I am, very truly,

ED. HUGHES,

*Resident Engineer, The Tomlinson Construction Co.,  
The Canadian National Railways.*



## II. OLD TIMERS WHO WERE THERE.

*J. Tomkins, No. 7 Fell Avenue, Vancouver, B.C.*

When the Rebellion broke out I was Indian interpreter at Duck Lake. On arrival of Commissioner Irvine I was transferred to his Department and worked as a Headquarters Scout in Carlton and Prince Albert. Made the ride from Fort Carlton to Snake Plains with despatches to the farm instructor in charge and the Reverend John MacKay, with orders to hold the Indians, if possible, which was done. Rode 50 miles on the 27th of March—there was lots of snow—and delivered these despatches in 12 hours. Rode Mr. H. Reed's horse, Dandy, arriving back in Carlton just as it was set on fire and acted as scout in advance of troops to Prince Albert. Good road all the way; used sleighs.

I was under orders to General Strange from the time the troops arrived in Fort Pitt until after the white women were returned and the Indian prisoners captured and brought to Fort Pitt, headed by Wandering Spirit.

I was interpreter and guide to Hayter Reed of the Indian Department, who at that time was Indian Commissioner and Brigade General. We left Prince Albert on board the S.S. Northwest and disembarked at Fort Pitt. There met General Strange. I was instructed to guide the scouting force to Frenchman's Butte, where there was a fight, but as I was on my way to find out where the white prisoners were, I did not see this battle. I returned to Fort Pitt when the white prisoners were brought in and afterwards returned to Battleford, where I was stationed as interpreter to the Indian Agents, who after the Indian trials were John Rae, a Mr. Wilson and Archdeacon MacKay. I left the service in 1887, going to Montana.

\* \* \* \*

*R. G. MacBeth, Vancouver.*

Noticing an item in the Vancouver Province asking for men who were with General Strange's Alberta Field Force, I may say that I was Lieutenant in No. 1 Company of the Winnipeg Light Infantry and that I was in action at Frenchman's Butte. At the time I enlisted I was a law student in Winnipeg. Born in Kildonan, near by the home of the Selkirk

Settlers. Your idea of preserving some record of this Force and its campaign is a worthy one. The movement of this Force from Calgary to Edmonton headed off many efforts by the Indians. In my book, "The Making of the Canadian West," you will find a quite detailed account of our Alberta Field Force Campaign. It was written from my notes or diary written up all through the campaign.

\* \* \* \*

*A. C. D. Pigott, Vancouver.*

I was on Big Bear's Trail with the troops from Fort Pitt to Loon Lake and was the only white man in Big Bear's last camp, north of Loon Lake.

\* \* \* \*

*W. T. Oke, Sardis, B.C.*

I was with Steele's Scouts. I joined up in Calgary with the Scouts and was in all the engagements that took place then.

\* \* \* \*

*George W. Wilks, Vancouver.*

I had the honour of serving in that campaign—as bugler in No. 1 Kildonan Company of the Winnipeg Light Infantry. Company officers were Captains Pilsworth, First Lieutenant Sutherland, Second Lieutenant MacBeth, and officer in charge of the battalion, Colonel Osborne Smith, later receiving the North-West Medal. If you wish any further reminiscences of those thrilling days of the march from Calgary to Edmonton, of the arrival at Fort Pitt which was still burning as the Indians had fired it—nothing remained but smoking ruins, I will be glad to give them. No infantry took part at Loon Lake, only the Mounted Police under Colonel Sam Steele.

\* \* \* \*

*James H. Stevenson, Vancouver.*

I came to Battleford in June, 1883. I think I was the youngest boy to carry arms in the Poundmaker scare of 1884. I was in the Battleford Rifles in 1885, under Captain E. E. Nash and Major Smith. I was one of the men sent out to bring in the body of Barney Freemont. I was in the Battle of Cut Knife Hill under Colonel Otter. Also one of the party sent to Frog Lake. I was in Ross's Scouts with Colonel Otter in the Flying Column north after Big Bear. Along with

Ross, Captain Sayers and a scout by the name of Short met some of General Strange's Scouts near old Fort Pitt. I was only fourteen in '85, and my memory is very clear of things that happened, such as Major Crozier; Paddy Burke, killed at Cut Knife; the hanging of the Indians; the trip north, following Big Bear's trail when he had Mrs. Gowanlock and Mrs. Delaney and the McLean girls; also Frog Lake and old Fort Pitt. If I can be of any assistance to you please let me know. Mrs. J. M. Skelton is my aunt.

\* \* \* \*

*C. E. B. Bright, Calgary.*

I served all through the Rebellion with Sam Steele, Otter and Horchmer.

\* \* \* \*

*R. H. Melcalfe, Norwood Grove.*

The writer was a member of the 65th Battalion and was with General Strange's Column throughout the campaign, having enlisted at Montreal at the age of sixteen. The General was much liked and used to address the Battalion in the French language which suited the boys, as possibly not more than ten per cent were English-speaking. We all got along nicely together and the writer for one learned to speak their language. Trusting you may meet with every success in your endeavour.

\* \* \* \*

*Angus Morrison, Fort Pitt.*

Here is one who is still alive and is within four miles of the old trenches at Frenchman's Butte and was with the force when they got the two women from the Indians at Loon Lake. There are some in Battleford who know me, that is Mr. Rowland, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. John Todd.

\* \* \* \*

*E. A. Hayes, Okotoks, Alberta.*

I was a member of Steele's Scouts under General Strange. I may say that we took the bodies of the victims of the Frog Lake Massacre from the wells and cellars and buried them when we arrived there; also we found the body of the Policeman who was killed at Fort Pitt-Cowan. Also I was in the engagements at Frenchman's Butte and Loon Lake. All the

members of Steele's Scouts or nearly all are now gone as far as I know.

\* \* \* \*

*Sam Weir, Winnipeg.*

I belonged to the Winnipeg Ninety-first Battalion Winnipeg Light Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Osborne Smith.

\* \* \* \*

*John O. Williams, Calgary.*

I have a vivid picture of the situation found at Frog Lake when we arrived, and was one of the advanced party finding the bodies of the victims, including the two priests; also of Fort Pitt, where the body of Mounted Police Cowan was found. Saw the condition of the body, etc. I was also on advance duty at Frenchman's Butte and can remember exact positions of our troops at that battle. We were a part of the column of troops following Indians to Loon Lake and Cold Lake. Our company was one of the force held at Fort Pitt after all trouble was over until all Indians had surrendered. Being on some geological work from Meadow Lake to Fort Pitt, thence across to St. Walburg and Battleford, I took a look over our old battle ground at Frenchman's Butte in 1928. I found the old rifle pits of the Indians. They were not filled in by dust or clays to any great amount but large poplar trees were growing up out of them and were of good size. I had the honor of being one of four members of the Manitoba Dragoons selected to represent the Province at the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, having the bronze medal for same—1897.

\* \* \* \*

*Captain W. Parker, Medicine Hat.*

I beg to state that I was an eye-witness of the engagement of Frenchman's Butte, being a member of Major Steele's Scouts and was one of the advanced Scouts that located the Indians in their intrenched position on the opposite side of a muskeg. The following day I was sent back to Fort Pitt as part of an escort to bring General Middleton to General Strange's camp, so was not present at Steele's engagement at Loon Lake.

*R. L. Barber, Calgary*, has sent an interesting account of his experiences, beginning with his enlistment at Calgary after a year's prospecting in the foothills. The latter part of his story is as follows:

General Strange arrived at Fort Pitt on the 25th of May, after passing Frog Lake, the scene of the massacre, where he detailed men to bury the dead he found there. Fort Pitt was still smouldering, having been set on fire on the evening of the 24th. We remained one day at Fort Pitt, and then started after the Indians and came upon them at Frenchman's Butte, which was a very high hill. We formed a line for attack. About 200 Indians were circling Frenchman's Butte, but a few shots from the 9-pounder soon drove them off—they did not like the gun "that spoke twice." We followed the Indians and came up to them at Stand Off Coulee. There we found rifle pits dug and protected by trees, extending about a mile and a half along the brow of the hill. Previous to our coming, the Indians had decided to hold a Sun Dance. However, before the ceremony was well under way, they were disturbed by the information that the soldiers were near. The prisoners and the families were moved across the little Red Deer River, out of sight, and the Indians spent the night making rifle pits and throwing up defences in preparation for the next day's battle. The column retired about two miles and bivouacked for the night. We advanced again at daybreak in an easterly direction. The Police, Scouts and Mounted Rifles deployed as skirmishers, the 65th forming the Advance Guard behind the skirmishers and the Winnipeg Light Infantry followed as the main body. The Police and the Scouts advanced into the Valley in skirmishing order, followed by the 65th and Col. Smith's battalion, covered by the 9-pounder which kept up a steady fire on the opposite side where the Indians were in force. This continued about three hours. Major Steele was now sent out to scout around to the left, and Major Hatton to the right of the enemy's position. They returned and reported to General Strange that the hills and valleys swarmed with Indians. General Strange, feeling that with so small a force and no supports nearer than Battleford, it was useless to go on, determined to retire, waiting reinforcements, so the troops were withdrawn and retired up the valley, covered by the Winnipeg Light Infantry, and in this engagement two of the 65th were wounded.

In the morning the Mounted troops detoured to the rear of the Indians' position of the day before, but found they had retreated towards Loon Lake in the night. When we came to their camp, there were thousands of dollars' worth of furs on the ground, but we were not allowed to dismount from our horses. These furs had been stolen from the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Pitt. We then returned to camp; next day sixty-five of us left early under the command of Col. Steele, after Big Bear and his band, who were in the Loon Lake district. We rode single file through the bush and then stopped at noon to give our horses rest and eat our hard tack; and just as we rode off, Scout Fiske was shot in the arm. We dismounted and went skirmishing through the bush where we saw several Indians running into the bushes but they escaped.

We rode until 12 o'clock midnight and camped between two sloughs, building a barricade with trees and our saddles. We took up Big Bear's trail at daylight, which was about two o'clock in the morning and came upon him about 10 o'clock but found most of the Indians had retreated across the narrow neck of the lake. Big Bear tried to get his braves to recross the lake and attack and told them that the soldiers were not all there, but that half of them had stayed behind. Some of the Indians would start across but a few shots sent them hurrying back among the trees. Afterwards we found there were ten killed before they could all cross the lake and we could count several in the water and on the other side of the lake. The Indians did not appear to see very well. As our ammunition was about all gone, Col. Steele gave orders to retire. He sat on his horse on a hill until every man had passed him. We returned to the former camp, where we were joined by General Middleton and his troops from Battleford. We started next day to follow up Big Bear under General Middleton's command. After going for a day, we halted and the mounted troops under Col. Steele were sent after Big Bear. At every bend on Loon Lake, which was a crooked one, there would be rifle pits built to hold one man and built of stone in the front for protection. Here at Loon Lake we found the body of an Indian squaw who had hanged herself. She had been too old and too sick to travel with her tribe and had taken this means of preventing her capture by the soldiers. After about an hour, the order was countermanded and the troops ordered back to camp and then we marched back to Fort Pitt. We then went to Beaver

River and from there to Fort Pitt, where we rested a few days and the infantry went down the Saskatchewan River by boat and the mounted troops returned to Calgary, and the Rebellion was over. Our discharges were granted a few days after arriving in Calgary.

\* \* \* \*

### III. REPORT OF GENERAL STRANGE

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT RE N.W. REBELLION, 1885

DEPARTMENT OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE

*Appendix D. to the Report of the Major-General Commanding*

CAMP FORT PITT, May 28th, 1885.

TO MAJOR-GENERAL MIDDLETON, *Commanding.*

SIR,—

On the morning of the 25th, from intelligence received from Captain Qswald, advanced scout, that the ruins of Fort Pitt were still burning, with a force of Indians in the neighbourhood, I pushed on the first ten miles and reached Fort Pitt without opposition. I sent scouts in every direction. The Reverend Canon MacKay and the Reverend John McDougall crossed the river with scouts; they reported tracks made by white women's feet, and found slippers. I immediately made preparations to cross the river. Next day I received information that Major Steele, commanding advanced Scouts to the east or north side of the river, had been fired upon about ten miles distant from Fort Pitt, two Indians were killed, and their ponies captured, one of the Indians wore the Queen's medal, and is said to be the headman who commenced the outbreak at Saddle Lake. Meanwhile I had sent Major Perry with twenty Police to reconnoitre south side of the river. He is still absent. I subsequently received a report from Major Steele that the Indians were in force on his front; the Scouts counted one hundred and eighty-seven lodges. I immediately marched with all the troops at my disposal, after leaving a company of the 65th to fortify and protect what remained of Fort Pitt, with the camp equipage and stores I left behind. Mustering 195 rank and file Infantry, 29 Cavalry, and one gun—wishing to advance quickly—I used all the available wagons to carry Winnipeg Light Infantry detachments and sent 65th detachment by river on flat boat. On reaching Major



**GENERAL STRANGE.**

Steele and his Scouts. I carried the wagons and advanced four miles and a half, and found the enemy occupying a very advantageous position, and signalling for reinforcements. I immediately attacked and drove them from their position without loss on my part. Major Steele with the North-West Police and Scouts under his command, carried the position on the left with the assistance of one company of Infantry of the W.L.I. The field gun, under Captain Strange and Sergeant O'Connor, N.W.M.P., and manned by a detachment W.L.I., made excellent practice. I was not able to wait for the junction of the 65th who left the boats and advanced with alacrity. I followed the enemy's trail till darkness was approaching through a



terribly thick and difficult country, where I could scarcely find space to corral the wagons and horses. The Force, being without tents, bivouacked under arms without camp fires.

At daybreak on the 28th, I again moved forward, finding numerous traces of recent trails joining the Indian troops from every direction. About 7.30 a.m. I found the enemy occupying an impregnable position in the forks of the Red Deer and Little Red Deer, presenting a salient with a natural glacis crowned with brush and rifle-pits along the crest. The Red Deer River, which expands into a muskeg, covering the front and flanks of the position which extended about three miles. I deployed the little force at my disposal, throwing forward Major Steele, W.M.I., dismounted, and Scouts, and 65th detachment under Colonel Hughes and half W.L.I. extending on their right, remaining in reserve. Colonel Osborne Smith commanding reserves. Major Hutton, Alberta Mounted Rifles, covering right flank, the gun under Captain Strange and Sergeant Owen made excellent practice, silencing several rifle-pits. I corralled the wagons in rear. Finding the direct attack in front impracticable, I ordered Major Steele to retire his men, mount and make a detour to endeavor to turn the enemy's right flank while occupying their attention in front. While being absent for some time, he returned and reported the enemy's position extending for a mile and a half with the muskeg in front impassable for his men, the enemy's position being about three miles in extent and defended, the Scouts informed me, by at least six hundred men, some of whom crept through the wood around me and opened fire upon the wagons corralled in rear. The teamsters, however, under Captain Wright, 43rd Regiment, remained steady under fire. I judged it advisable to retire to more open ground. This was carried out by the Forces with perfect deliberation, the gun under Captain Strange firing until the last moment, the enemy's fire dying away almost; the return being covered by Major Steele's men, dismounted, we were not molested. They retired to open ground six miles distant, where they corralled the wagons and turned out the horses to graze, and cooked provisions for the men. Our loss is very slight, considering the fire we were under, the men taking excellent cover:—

65th Battalion:

Private Le Mai, shot through the lungs.

do Marcotte, wounded seriously, but not dangerously.

Constable J. McRae, N.W.M.P., shot through the legs.

All the troops did their duty to my entire satisfaction. Thanks are specially due to Brigade Major Dale, Major Steele, Commanding Cavalry, and Colonel Osborne Smith and Colonel Hughes, Commanding Battalions, Captain Wright, Supply Officer, Major Boulton, Commanding Bridging Party. Surgeon Pennyfather made arrangements for the Field Hospital.

(Sgd.) T. B. STRANGE,  
Major-General,  
and Colonel Commanding Field Force.

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"The North-West Rebellion," Major Boulton.

"The War Trail of Big Bear," W. Bleasdell Cameron.

Notes re Edmonton Volunteer Company, John A. Mitchell.

#### INTERVIEWS

(Late) Maj.-Gen. Sir Sam Steele, K.C.B., M.V.O.

Hon. Frank Oliver.

(Late) James Green, N.W.M.P. (with Major Perry).

W. Bleasdell Cameron.

Kenneth A. McLeod, Edmonton Volunteer Company.

John A. Mitchell, Edmonton Volunteer Company.

Dougald Cameron, 91st Winnipeg Light Infantry.

Joseph Paquette, Laboucane Settlement.

L. G. Lovell, Onion Lake, Sask. (wagon transport).

Patrick Kelly, St. Albert Mounted Rifles.

Edward Carey, St. Albert Mounted Rifles.

W. R. West, Steele's Scouts.

Alex. Rowland, Steele's Scouts.

Frank Lucas, Fort Ethier.

Ray Gaetz, Red Deer, Alta.

Lieut.-Col. Frank Osborne, Dispatch Rider.

Major R. G. Hardisty, Dispatch Rider.

Maj.-Gen. Hon. W. A. Griesbach, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

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Great War a systematic search for oil bearing structures began. Peru, near the Equator, and Fort Norman, near the Arctic Circle, Colombia, Ecuador and Alaska and the Prairie Provinces have been trekked. Only Peru and Colombia, and in a lesser degree, in the Turner Valley, have worth-while holdings been secured. During the period between 1889 and 1913, 1,203 wells had been drilled, bringing production up to 1,405,786 barrels for the year 1913. In 1929 the production was eleven million barrels. In Colombia, between 1926 and 1930, 70,274,196 barrels of crude oil have been piped into Imperial tankers for its refineries in Canada at Calgary, Regina, Montreal, Dartmouth, Ioco and Sarnia. The development of its South American fields led to the phenomenal growth in the Company's transport fleet. Its fleet in 1899 consisted of three large barges towed up and down the lakes by chartered tugs. In 1930 its fleet consisted of fifteen large ocean going vessels and ten steamships for lake service. This fleet carried 23,000,000 barrels in the year. The world's largest oil tanker, C. O. Stillman, carries nearly seven million gallons of crude oil.

The amazing growth of the Imperial Oil Limited has directly stimulated activity in the fields of Science, Art and Literature to achieve the enrichment of Canadian Nationalism.

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### THE SOCIETY'S PROGRESS

The main objective is to interview and edit stories of life activities of the pioneers of the earliest settlement days. It is expected that interviewing of the pioneers of the 70's and 80's will be completed in the coming year. Thereafter it is hoped the publication of the series will be greatly hastened. Hundreds of documents received exhibit a keen appreciation of our pioneers to assist in putting in order the historical archives of the Prairie Provinces. It may be that errors will creep in. However, the publications are so arranged that corrections and additions may be made at any time. Additional numbers will be published on the same subject, as new material or facts are secured. For example, very interesting light can be thrown on the Loon Lake story by the report of Steele and the reminiscences of Halpin now on file, as well as those of Father Legoff. Each publication calls for more stories. It may be the desire of the future historian to edit the Society's proposed ten volumes of some eight to twelve numbers each in much more condensed and interesting form. For the present

every effort should be made to secure the material before the pioneer passes. Besides documents very many helpful pictures have been received.

The Library contains almost every book. There has just been received: "The Mohawk Princess," Mrs. W. Garland Foster; "Peter Pond," H. A. Innis; "Fifty Years in Western Canada," Morice; "Canada's Western Arctic," Burwash; "Historic Posts and Trading Posts," Voorhis; "The Red Man's Wonder Book," H. A. Kennedy.

The success of the Historical Society depends upon the activity of its editors. At present about 40 men and women are generously preparing material on various subjects. Here are a few which have volunteered lately:

"Fifty Years on the Prairies," A. S. Carter, Prince Rupert.

"Swift Current," Judge Buckles, Battleford.

"Father Legoff," Rev. Father Jan, Edmonton.

"Pelly," W. Clark Sandercock, Pelly.

"Edmonton," McCool, Edmonton.

"Southern Alberta," J. W. Morrow, Medicine Hat.

"Calgary," J. E. McLeod, Calgary.

"Archdeacon MacKay," Campbell Innes, Estevan.

"On the Souris River," Campbell Innes, Estevan.

"Fort Saskatchewan," H. A. Gibson, Fort Saskatchewan.

"Fort Qu'Appelle," Dr. Hall, Fort Qu'Appelle.

"Charlie Parker," Ruth Matheson, Winnipeg.

*The Editor of "The Alberta Field Force of 1885,"* Colonel F. C. Jamieson, V.D., B.C., M.L.A., is an Edmonton lawyer and member of the Alberta Legislature. His military experience is as follows: A private in the Canadian Mounted Rifles in the South African War under Lt.-Col. Lawrence Herchmer, Commander of the Divisional Mounted Troops of the First Canadian Division; G.S.O.I. Sarsce Camp, July-November, 1916; with British and Canadian Recruiting Mission in the U.S.A. and as Commander of the 260th Canadian Rifles, a unit of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (Siberia), 1919. After demobilization assisted as Regimental and Brigade Commander in the reorganization of the Edmonton Militia units; unsuccessful Conservative candidate in 1926 and 1930 in Federal Riding of West Edmonton; his first study of the history of the Alberta Field Force was made for the Alberta Military Institute.

# THE COMING PUBLICATIONS

CANADIAN NORTH-WEST HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
proposed volumes and subjects based on the source history of  
the Pioneer. Subject to change—as to subject and volume.  
The biography and documents of prominent Old Timers will  
be added to these volumes, making additional numbers.

## VOLUME I

Cree Rebellion of '84  
Louis Cochin, O.M.I.  
Canon Matheson  
Story of the Press, Pt. 1  
Fifty Years on the Saskatchewan  
The Dominion Telegraph  
The Alberta Field Force of 1885  
Story of the Press, Pt. 2

## VOLUME II

Fort Qu'Appelle  
Early Surveys  
With General Strange  
Archdeacon MacKay  
Fish Creek  
Anglican Missions  
Fort Carlton  
Calgary  
Coal

## VOLUME III

Fort Pitt  
Education  
Medicine  
Moose Jaw  
The Police Posts  
Pincher Creek  
The Constitutional History  
Edmonton  
Oil

## VOLUME IV

Pelly  
Buffalo Hunting  
Prince Albert  
Battleford in Danger  
Men of '73-74  
Macleod  
Presbyterian Missions  
The French in the North-West  
Geology  
The Story of wheat.

VOLUME IX: The Early Explorers; The Hudson's Bay Company; Frog  
Lake; Isle à la Croix; Pioneer Senators; Duck Lake; The Black  
feet; Indian Legends.

VOLUME X: The French in the North-West; The North West Com-  
pany; The Red River Jig; Fort Chippewyan; Societies; The Stoneys;  
Overlanders of 1862; The Fur Trade; Swift Current; Old Timers  
Register of '85.

## VOLUME V

With Her Majesty's Mail  
Bresaylor Settlement  
Regina  
Roman Catholic Missions  
Land Settlement  
Indian Chiefs of Treaty Days  
Cut Knife Hill  
Police Commissioners  
In Sunshine and Storm  
Methodist Missions

## VOLUME VI

Early Transportation  
Lethbridge  
Cumberland House  
Railways  
The Barr Colony  
The Police in the Rebellion  
Indian Chiefs  
Saskatchewan Trails  
Colonization

## VOLUME VII

Ranching  
The Free Traders  
Saskatoon  
Alberta Leaders  
Pathfinders  
The Prairiewomen  
Electioneering  
Red River Families  
In Forest and Stream

## VOLUME VIII

On the Souris River  
Batoche  
Gold Mining  
Saskatchewan Leaders  
Louis Riel and His Colleagues  
The Cree Indian  
The Sioux  
Lumbering

## THE BATTLEFORD TRAIL

*By E. Pauline Johnson*

The Northwestern Territories have never looked so glorious as in this last year of Grace 1902. Never were there such turquoise skies, such golden brown acres of prairie grass, billowing away to the four points of the compass. The crisp October air caught us with the first hint of autumn as we emerged from the comfortable warmth of a drowsy sleeping car, and stepped on to the station platform at Saskatoon, where the lordly Saskatchewan River rolls away northwards and where memories crowd about you at the very mention of the town—dear little Saskatoon, which during those tempestuous days of the '85 Rebellion stretched out its arms and took the sick and wounded, the dying and the dead, right into its tiny village heart, for was it not the Hospital town again after the Ratoche and Duck Lake affairs—and has not our sweet Canadian songstress, Agnes Maule Machar, immortalized it in verse? Saskatoon wears her laurels well, and they do not fade with the years, for when some old timer gets his pipe, and his recollections into activity, he will sit by the fire and tell you of those stormy days when the little settlement was a refuge for

*"The boatman on the river,  
The hunter on the plain."*

We breakfasted and got our luggage into shape for the long drive into the interior, and then there was a clatter of horses and wheels outside. The crack of the "blacksnake" whip, a dash, then a halt, and "All aboard for Battleford," rang out the driver's voice, and the stage with His Majesty's Mails was at the door. And what a trail—velvety, dark soft prairie sod, devoid of stones or ruts, or hills, or hollows! The early morning sun was yellow and gleaming, the October sky cloudless, the whole world was large and limitless, at last, this was the mighty unbroken West, with the town and railroad dropping behind us and one hundred miles of prairie between us and the little historic, romance-crowned settlement of Battleford.

*By Courtesy of Mrs. W. Garland Foster,  
Author of "The Mohawk Princess."*